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SUBJECT: GOI DISCUSSES EU-BAM RENEWAL WITH USSC

REF: TEL AVIV 0612

Classified By: Acting DCM Marc Sievers, Reasons: 1.4 (B and D).

¶1. (C//REL TO USA, AUS, CAN, and GBR) In a March 7 meeting with USSC Dayton and attended by the MoD Political-Military Director's advisor Oded Herman, MFA Senior Deputy Director General Ambassador Yossi Gal expressed the GoI's strong interest in renewing the EU-BAM mission, contingent upon receiving satisfactory answers from the EU on the issues of transit through Rafah of people and goods of concern. Gal initially insisted on holding the renewal contingent on there being clear positions by all of the involved parties on procedures to prevent the flow of large sums of cash through Rafah. USSC Dayton explained the limited value to pushing the EU-BAM, which serves as a monitor, and not a policy maker, to encourage the Palestinians and Egyptians to change their rules. USSC Dayton pointed to the absence of repeat incidents of the flow of large sums of cash through Rafah as proof that recent decisions by the involved parties to not allow the flow of more than USD 10,000 through Rafah are working. Gal agreed to consider this perspective as well as a proposal by LTG Dayton to announce the opening of Rafah for three days each week to preclude chaos at the crossing on the limited days it is open. Gal said the GoI is amenable to signing the Customs Protocol following unspecified "minor changes."

¶2. (C//REL TO USA, AUS, CAN, and GBR) Gal conveyed his concern that discussions on the impediments to the continuous operations of Rafah Crossing are occurring in two separate channels, namely, the USSC-led Security Working Group and the EU's bilateral meetings with the GoI on the extension of the EU-BAM mission led by EU-BAM Head of Mission LTG Pietro Pistolese and European Union Special Representative Marc Otte (reftel). USSC Dayton agreed to Gal's suggestion for a trilateral meeting with Gal, Otte, and USSC Dayton at the end of March to synchronize efforts on the renewal of the EU-BAM mission and resolve impediments to continuous operations of the Rafah Crossing.

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JONES